Doubling the cargo handling capacity

965. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a'fact that his Ministry plans to more than double the current cargo handling capacity of ports from 676 million tonne to 1,500 million tonne in the next five years;

(b) whether it is a fact that his Ministry intends to increase capacity by setting up new ports, upgrading old ports, deepening channels, increasing and strengthening hinterland connectivity and improving logistical services; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) The aggregate cargo handling capacity in the 12 major ports as on 31.3.2006 is 456.20 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) as against which 423.41 million tonnes (MT) were handled in 2005-06. In addition, non-major ports handled about 150 MT in 2005-06. Keeping in view the future growth of the Indian economy, a sizeable expansion in port capacity in India needs to be achieved, both in the major and non-major ports. Towards this goal, various projects for development of berths, deepening of channels, modernization and upgradation of cargo handling equipments, improvement in rail/road connectivity and development of other associated facilities have been taken up for major ports. The non-major ports sector under the State Governments also have to expand significantly.

Ndn-impiementation of BoT projects

966. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Planning Commission's failed attempt at redesigning public-private partnership contracts for roads since January, 2005 has paralysed the Nation's Highway building exercise;